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FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8199  
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE  
RUCNMGH/MAGHREB COLLECTIVE  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0507  
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 2050  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0854  
RUEHDO/AMEMBASSY DOHA 0445  
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0523  
RUEHPG/AMEMBASSY PRAGUE 0083  
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE  
RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUEHDS/USMISSION USAU ADDIS ABABA  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 0556  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0961

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 000189

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [LY](#) [MR](#)

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT ABDALLAHI RETURNS TO NOUAKCHOTT AND  
LEAVES FOR LIBYA

REF: A. NOUAKCHOTT 183

[1](#)B. NOUAKCHOTT 72

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Dennis Hankins for reasons 1.4 (b) and  
(d).

[1](#)1. (SBU) At around noon local time on March 6, President Abdallahi and his vehicle convoy arrived in Nouakchott from his native village of Lemden. PolAsst and EconOff observed at least 200 cars (most of them packed with people) in the procession, lights flashing and horns blaring. Pictures of President Abdallahi were plastered on cars, and there were scattered groups of supporters along the road into downtown. As the President's Land Cruiser slowly passed each group of supporters, they mobbed his vehicle, shouting and trying to shake his hand. The convoy ended at Abdallahi's private residence in the northern part of Nouakchott, where several hundred supporters had gathered to welcome him. Abdallahi attended Friday prayers at a nearby mosque and met with the FNDD delegation that had just returned from its own trip to Libya. Abdallahi then went to the airport accompanied by four of his ministers and other members of his entourage, boarded the plane, and left for Libya without incident. The President returned March 8 and returned to Lemden. Post expects a readout of the Libya visit by March 9 and will report SEPTEL.

[1](#)2. (SBU) PolAsst observed a limited police presence on the streets while Abdallahi was in town; the police made no attempt to hinder the convoy's progress. The only sign of opposition to Abdallahi's entrance into Nouakchott was a lone woman by the side of the road holding a picture of General Aziz. Not surprisingly, official state-run media did not cover Abdallahi's return to the capital.

[1](#)3. (C) Comment: Abdallahi's return was overshadowed by the news the same morning of Israel's imminent closing of its embassy and departure (Ref A), a move no doubt planned carefully by the junta to coincide with Abdallahi's return. Nevertheless, Abdallahi did get the type of entrance into Nouakchott that he wanted (a large convoy, and at the date and time of his choosing) - something the junta had refused him previously on January 22 (Ref B). Unfortunately, the presence of Libyan diplomats in the convoy and Aziz's desire to cozy up to Qadhafi probably had much to do with the convoy's smooth entrance into the capital. Without the pressure of the Libyans on the junta and a looming visit by

Qadhafi, it is unlikely Abdallahi will be allowed to make another such entrance into Nouakchott in the future. End comment.

HANKINS